ensure that the statutory 3% rate of return per annum on net fixed assets is earned. In order to achieve this return, it was suggested that :—

— the capital base of the SEBs should be increased to achieve a debt : equity ratio of 1:1.

— tariff should cover generation costs fully;

— State Governments must pay Rural Electrification (RE) subsidy regularly, and

— State Electricity Boards should be compensated when they have to supply power to the consumers at a cost less than the cost of generation.

(c) The State Electricity Boards are autonomous organisations under the State Governments and the initiative in these matters has to be of the State Governments/SEBs concerned How ever, it is gratifying that in response to constant persuasion several State Governments/SEBs have taken steps to implement the suggestions by raising tariffs; by modifying the capital base; and by paying RE subsidy to State Electricity Boards.

Foreign Tourists in North-East Region

*578. DR. JAYANTA RONGPI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of foreign exchange earned from tourism in North East region during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the regulations for the visit of the foreign tourists to North East region are not at par with the rest of the country; and

(c) if so, the details of disparities existing in this regard and the steps taken to increase the foreign exchange earnings from tourists visiting this region ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) Estimates of foreign exchange earnings from tourism are not compiled separately for different States and regions

(b) Yes, Sir

(c) Foreigners are not allowed to visit most parts of North Eastern States without special permission. This restriction is being reviewed from time to time and suitable relaxations are made to increase the flow of foreign tourist traffic to the region. Other steps taken include improvement of infra-structural facilities and overseas publicity of places of tourist attraction

Rail Fare Concession to Handicapped Persons

*579 SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to extend the rail fare concession to physically handicapped persons in the air-conditioned chair cars and air-conditioned sleeper cars, and

(b) if not, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) :

(a) Such physically handicapped persons who are eligible for concession by First class can travel by AC Sleeper by paying the difference in fare.

(b) Does not arise.